

# Four Habits of Physical Health

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The pursuit of physical health among boys has long been one of the stated objectives of the Royal Rangers program. The four gold points of the Royal Rangers emblem represent the four ways a boy grows, signifying the four ways the Royal Rangers programs seeks to facilitate growth in our boys. Physical health is one of them.

A healthy physical condition provides a boy with a platform for attaining many benefits in life and will enable him to participate in physical activities that will build confidence, develop character, and experience the world around him.



The following four habits provide boys with an effective process for pursuing physical health. Review this material with your boys and discuss ways they can pursue health in their daily routines. Additional information concerning a boy's physical health can be found in the "Physical Growth" chapters of the Discovery, Adventure, and Expedition Rangers handbooks.

## Eat Right

Eating a good diet is crucial to physical growth. As your body grows into adulthood, it needs a regular supply of nutrients. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) suggests these guidelines to help you pick the best food and know how much to eat.

- Balance your calorie intake. Enjoy your food but eat less. Avoid oversized portions.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables and at least half your grains whole grains.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.

- Don't eat too much salt. Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals and choose the foods with lower numbers.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

More information on selecting the right foods for a healthy, balanced diet can be found at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov).

## Play Hard

Exercise plays a big role in being strong and healthy. It can help you feel better and have more energy. It can also improve your mood. Experts suggest that guys your age should get an hour or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.

Exercise has some very important benefits:

- Exercise benefits your body and your mind. Exercise helps keep muscles working properly. It also causes the body to make something called endorphins. These endorphins can help you feel happier.
- Exercising can help you get in shape. Exercise burns calories. It keeps your muscles in good shape and it helps you stay at a healthy weight.
- Exercise helps cut the risk of some diseases. Being a healthy weight cuts your risk of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. These diseases are becoming more common in kids and teens. Exercise can take many different forms. Any activity that gets your muscles working can be a great way to promote your physical growth.

## Rest Well

Everybody needs rest. You can only operate for so long until you begin to shut down because of lack of rest. Just like eating, sleep is required for you to grow and be healthy. Sleep lets your body rest and refresh. It lets your brain reset and prepares you for another day. Scientists think sleep is when your brain archives information and solves problems. Guys your age typically need about nine to eleven hours of sleep each night. How much sleep you need can be judged by how you feel. When people don't get enough sleep, they are cranky or clumsy. They have problems concentrating. And they have trouble staying awake. If you regularly seem to have these issues, you may not be getting enough sleep. Go to bed earlier and see if it helps. Getting rid of your symptoms could be that simple.

There's more to resting well than just getting enough sleep. Sometimes, you can rest by just changing activities. Reading a book, drawing a picture, listening to music, or working on a hobby can be good ways to enjoy some time away from normal activities. Whatever form of rest you take, be sure to listen to your body and mind. Find a form of rest that helps you recharge for the next round of activity.

## Stay Clean

Keeping your body clean is important. Everyone needs to practice good personal cleanliness. It can be particularly valuable for guys your age. Your body soon will be going through a stage known as puberty. When that happens, some important changes will take place. Your voice will begin to deepen. You may grow more body hair and your muscles may get larger and stronger for no apparent reason. These are normal and natural changes. They are a typical part of a guy's development.

These changes are related to a number of new chemicals, called hormones, your body develops at this stage. These hormones can cause some unpleasant changes, too. There may be an increase in body odor from sweat. You may have a skin problem like acne. You may have both. Usually, these problems can be managed by using good hygiene habits.

### Body Odor

Most people deal with body odor by using deodorant or antiperspirant after showering. A deodorant is a product typically made as a spray, a solid stick, or a gel. You can apply it to the parts of your body that produce the most sweat and odor, your armpits. Deodorants help kill bacteria that causes odor. Antiperspirants are used in the same way but work differently. They keep you from sweating. Deodorants and antiperspirants are often found together in one product.

### Skin Care

Another common by-product of your physical development is an increase in the body oils on your skin. These oils can clog the pores of your skin and cause acne. Acne is small red blemishes. Acne can often be prevented or controlled by washing your skin regularly. It also helps to avoid food or drinks that contain large amounts of sugar or oil. Chocolate, soda pop, and potato

chips are examples of things with lots of sugar and oil. Special soaps can also help you treat acne. Your doctor can prescribe medication if you need it.

## Hair

Keeping your hair clean can be a major factor in presenting a clean image. You should wash your hair every day if possible. Keep it looking neat by combing or brushing it before it dries. If your hair tends to be dry or uncontrollable use a conditioner. Conditioner adds moisture and nutrients to your hair.

## Teeth

Your teeth should be brushed at least twice daily. It's good to brush after every meal and at bedtime. Brushing your teeth reduces the likelihood of tooth decay and gum disease. This helps to ensure your teeth serve you well throughout life. Brushing also helps rid your mouth of bacteria that cause bad breath.

By practicing these four simple habits of physical health on a regular basis, you will feel better, look better, and be well on your way to preparing for your next big adventure, wherever the trail may lead!



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